

Sklarow: "I was Dean up an independent school. So, it wasn't completely independent in Philadelphia. Pretty interesting School two-thirds of our kids were below poverty level."

## **LATER IN THE INTERVIEW**

Sam: "I'm doing another story separate from the consultant story. I'm looking at 504 plans across the country and specifically in Los Angeles and Southern California. There seems to be a discrepancy between kids in wealthier districts getting 504s and kids in poor districts getting 504's, meaning that the kids in wealthier districts are getting them far more often. I was wondering if you had any thoughts on that."

Sklarow: "So there is no question that that's true and I am thankful that there's research being done on that [and] not only 504 accommodations, [but on accommodations] for SATs and ACTs. Someone told me...I don't know if it's exactly accurate, but I think it conveys the right idea. [They said] that a few years back not a single kid in Compton had accommodations on the SATs, but 35 percent of the kids in Beverly Hills did. It's a function of counseling that has time and the ability to focus on student needs and in so many of our poorer school districts counselors are dealing with so much. They're not only dealing with academic courses and college selection, they're dealing with family violence issues and they're dealing with you know, adolescent emotional or mental health issues and they're just dealing with so much that a student who needs accommodations whether in a 504 plan or something else, there just isn't the time... almost the luxury of time to do it, but it goes further. And that is if you are a single working mom, and I apologize in advance, I can get pretty kind of emotional about this kind of issue, but you have a single working mom who's told to come in for a 504 plan meeting and you've got to decide if I take off

from work. I'm either going to lose the money I need to feed my family or I'm going to be penalized because they're going to dock my salary or they're going to fire me. So, what do I do? Do I protect all of my four kids? And make sure that they have food? Or do I hope this one kid that needs accommodations? Well, I don't think parents in Beverly Hills quite have that concern to make. If they need to be there in the schools, they are going to be there in the school because they're not being paid a minimum hourly wage. So, it is one of the great the great unfairnesses of our system that the access to accommodations is dependent upon the wealth of the school district the student is enrolled in. It's not supposed to be that way. I don't want to imply that that's that maybe the way it is, but it sure is not the way it ought to be."

Sam: Yeah, definitely. Do you so we've been trying to the only data obviously 504 plans are only really the only really reply to public schools and private schools have their own versions of these sorts of things.

There's no data that we can gather from private schools, which has been kind of a pain for us. Do you know? It's okay. If you don't, you know any experts on this sort of thing that I mean my partner might want to talk to you that could give us, you know, guesstimate of you know, how many people are in private schools are getting in or anything like that.

Just anyone you would recommend to us?

Sklarow: So again, can I send by email? I know both folks who are heads off or our senior people in schools for kids with learning differences, and I think they would know kind of what's going on in the broader world of Independent Schools, but I also know some people that that work and Independent Schools lots of them actually. So, let me make a note to myself and by the end of the week, I'll get answers to all of these for you.

Sam: "Yeah, if you want me to read off to the rest of the stuff that we said you were going to email me. That's fine. I can do that at the end too. If you missed anything.

Colby: "I'll do that at the end and we'll see if I missed anything.

Sam: "Okay, perfect. So, then there's just one specific example of the final start for stuff that I wanted to run by you. In LA there's this school called Palisades Charter School. They are loaded. They had they come from an area that's like a median income of I think 180 Grand. So yeah, it's a lot of money there. They have in the past since 2011, the only statistics available are between 2011-2015. They went up something like from about 3.7 percent of their kids having 504 plans to now I think it's eight point three percent of their kids having 504 plans. So that's a huge jump obviously in four years. Do you have any idea do you have any opinion on that? Is that you know based off what you've seen is that ridiculous is what.

Sklarow: "So let me give one one piece that could explain it and then a couple of possibilities that would be a little more unseemly. It could be that the school invested in faculty that were better suited to working with students with learning disabilities, they could take more students with learning disabilities and provided plans for those students. I mean that that seems totally plausible to me as someone who's been in the school that you have to make sure you're not accepting students into the school that you don't have appropriate educational experience for. So maybe there's a legitimate explanation for that. At the same time, you know, there has been a change over those years. There was a change in who got accommodations for the a ACTs and the SATs. If you went back to 2010 and a little before, a student had to file a request for accommodations have maybe a counselors letter saying yet the student really needs an untimed test or whatever the accommodation was. It changed around this time period that you're talking about and the change that occurred is you had to show if you wanted accommodations like an untimed SAT and I think we both know what an advantage that gets anybody. I shouldn't say advantage, supposed to level the playing field unless it's for a student who doesn't really have a disability.

The change was you had to demonstrate that the accommodations were given throughout your high school experience. So, you could no longer be in regular classes doing nothing no accommodations, but then suddenly ask for special treatment for the SATs or a ACTs.

Sam: "That's that's very very interesting. We've been kind of scratching our heads out to figure that out. We ever heard that yet.

Sklarow: "So you can imagine that some schools probably and some parents that back in the day may have said 'don't label my child as having a learning disability,' but then it came time for the SATs and they were like 'well I want my child to be in a room by themselves to have total quiet. I want my child to be able to you know, do whatever well suddenly you had to ask for the 504. Or else you couldn't get accommodations. So that's certainly a possibility.